Pacific School of Religion Berkeley, Calif.

The Christian Century PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

VOLUME V | CHICAGO, APRIL, 1934 | NUMBER 4

Congregational-Christian Number

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The Stars Fought Against Sisera!

BY CHARLES E. JEFFERSON

The stars in their courses fought against Sisera. Judges 5:20.

WHO was Sisera? He was a Canaanitish chieftain—the biggest man of his day. Everybody knew of him and everybody kotowed to him. His fame filled the earth. Even kings fought under him. His genius surpassed that of any other warrior. His equipment was superb. He had the strongest bows and arrows, the longest spears, the swiftest horses, and chariots of the latest style. His prestige struck terror into the hearts of his neighbors. He hated the Israelites, and he lorded it over them, and they took their punishment lying down. After repeated defeats and galling humiliations a woman named Deborah—a Jewish Joan of Arc, stung to desperation, made up her mind that these outrages must cease. She picked out a man who seemed to have in him the making of a general, Barak by name. A campaign was organized against Sisera. The two armies met on the plain of Esdraelon. Wonderful to relate, Sisera was defeated, routed, his army annihilated. Seeing that the day was lost, Sisera leaped from his chariot and ran across the fields until he came to the tent of a man by the name of Heber. His wife was the only person at home. The exhausted fugitive begged her for a drink of water. She gave him a bowl of milk. He lay down and fell asleep. While he slept his hostess drove a tent pin through his temples. This was the climax of the tragedy—the greatest warrior of his age killed by a woman!

It was a glorious victory, celebrated in verse and talked about for a thousand years. How did it happen? The Jewish historian Josephus helps us to understand. In his volume entitled "Jewish Antiquities" he tells us that the battle was preceded by a tempest of rain. The rain dashing into the faces of Sisera's soldiers blinded them. The rain was followed by a hail storm and the

25 Cents a Copy | Entered as second-class matter October 14, 1929, at Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published monthly by The Christian Century Press, 440 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. | Two Dollars a Year

hail so benumbed the hands of the soldiers that they could not bend their bows or draw their swords. Moreover, the rain caused the river Kishon to overflow its banks so that the entire plain became a morass in which the wheels of the chariots were stalled. The river became a raging flood and the horses, frightened by the swirling waters, reared and plunged in wild efforts to shake off their harness and were swept down with the charioteers to a common ruin. It was a crushing defeat. A poet—tradition says Deborah—celebrated the victory in verse and it is from this poem recorded in the fifth chapter of the old book of Judges that I have taken my text: "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera."

There are different ways of expressing a fact. An atheist would say, It was luck that fought against Sisera. A materialist would say, It was fate which fought against Sisera. A scientist would say, It was the forces of nature which fought against Sisera. A philosopher would say, It was the Cosmos or the Infinite which fought against Sisera. A religious man would say, It was God who fought against Sisera. But a poet would say, The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.

VICTORIES OF THE "UPPER WORLD"

This is a picturesque way of saying that the higher powers were arrayed against Sisera. The poet rises above the rain and the hail and soars straight toward the stars. He is sure that it was something outside the earth which brought about the downfall of Sisera. There is an upper world which is interested in what goes on on the earth, and it is by the aid of this upper world that victories are won. The prosaic man sees nothing but the rain and the hail. The poet sees deeper. He is a seer. He discerns the power of subtle forces which play through the hail and the rain. The bog was an incident in the battle but without the stars the bog could have done nothing. The poet sees the mud but he sees the stars also. It was the stars working through the mud that gave Barak the victory.

Why did the stars fight against Sisera? He was the representative of an effete civilization. He was the incarnation of a spirit which was to be exorcised from the earth. He was the spokesman of an era of blood and iron. His weapons all belonged to the past. He was the exponent of a bloody and brutal tradition on its way to the scrapheap. He was defeated not because of the clever manipulation of physical forces but because he stood for no principles which had a grip on the future. This war lord went down because he was not in tune with the Infinite. In other words, he was not in harmony with God. God was not on the side of a race which worshiped force but on the side of a people which later on was to give the world the twenty-third Psalm and the Prince of Peace.

This is a text for the discouraged. The world today is full of disheartened men and women. Millions are drooping because of their economic condition. The men out of a job, the men in the breadline, the men who have lost their money or their business or their farm or their home have discouragement written on their faces. But these are not the only doleful people. There is a host of noble hearted men and women whose hearts are drooping because their work for the kingdom of God has fallen on evil days. There is a moral slump. Idealism has lost its fervor. Humanitarian movements are retarded. Noble reforms have been defeated. High standards have been lowered, lofty ideals have been abandoned. Many faithful workers, looking at the wreckage, exclaim, "If God is with us why has all this befallen us?" There is no disappointment which cuts so deep into the heart as the fading of a radiant hope, the collapse of a noble cause.

There are three groups of servants of God who are just now in special need of heartening.

I

First in the list are the prohibitionists. Their hearts are sore. To them the repeal of the eighteenth amendment has been a stunning blow. That amendment was to them the proud achievement of a hundred years of struggle. The steps toward it had been slow and painful. First local option, then county prohibition, then state prohibition, and then national prohibition. Every foot of the way forward had been bitterly contested and every victory had been won by bloody sweat. The enemy had been driven back step by step by the unflinching heroism of men and women who were determined that the power of the saloon should be broken.

And now the eighteenth amendment is no more. The labor of a century has apparently come to little. The gains of three generations have been largely wiped out. We are down at the bottom and must begin to climb again. That is the way it seems to millions. We have gone back, far back, farther back than many imagine. We are to have the saloon again. The dry states cannot be adequately protected, not in this day of the automobile. Bootleggers and speakeasies will abound just as they have always abounded and still abound in all places where alcoholic drinks are manufactured and sold. What shall we do? Sit down and cry? Scold and groan? No! Let us think of the stars. They are fighting against Sisera. Sisera is alcohol. The stars always fight against alcohol because alcohol makes havoc of the homes of men. Long before the passage of the eighteenth amendment, the stars had been fighting the saloon. The railroads, the big business corporations, the life insurance companies had been arraying themselves one after the other against the drink evil. No matter what legislators may think or do, the stars in their courses are fighting on our side.

All is not lost. There are millions of prohibitionists yet. They are not dead or asleep. They have not laid aside their armor. Federal prohibition is only one of many methods of fighting the drink traffic. We now enter an era of varied experimentation. Forty-eight states will now try a variety of methods and some day we shall know which method works best. National prohibition is evidently not the most effective policy for the American people in their present stage of development. Legal coercion is only one method, moral suasion is another. Education must now be given a larger place. The constraint of love may in the long run do more than the compulsion of law. There is such a thing as soul-force and there is no reason why we should not use

it. But no matter what happens, let us remind ourselves that the stars are fighting for us.

II

In the company of the dejected, the workers for international peace have a conspicuous place. Never have there been so many of them, and never have they worked harder than since the world war, and never have they met with more cruel disappointments. Much of the latest peace machinery from which so much was expected seems to be futile. Many of the plans which sounded wise are turning out to be impracticable. The economic conference failed, so did the disarmament con-

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ference. The Paris pact is little more than a scrap of paper. The League of Nations has failed in its major operations. When the nations seemed to be moving toward an era of deeper understanding, a coterie of war lords in Japan, trampling on treaties and defying the conscience of mankind, threw the world back into hopelessness again. The situation was made more baffling when the government of Germany adopted an unprecedented and incredible course, still further ensnarling the world problem. The skies became still darker when a group of militarists in Washington City began to urge congress to appropriate hundreds of millions of dollars for new ships and guns, although we promised in the Paris pact to seek the solution of all international disputes only by pacific means. The air is filled with rumors and threats and direful predictions. In these days of depression, when all the nations are on the verge of bankruptcy, political leaders with a blindness which approaches insanity go right on increasing army and navy appropriations, thus crushing the masses down into a sullen and desperate mood which may some day burst out in revolution and anarchy, chaos and black night.

This is our consolation—the stars in their courses are fighting against Sisera. Sisera is militarism, the worship of force. Sisera is the devotee of the god of war. War is doomed. It is a feature of a brutal and bloody tradition, fit only for barbarians and savages. Sisera is always preparing for war. His creed is, In time of peace prepare for war. Sisera looks at the world through the bore of a gun. Sisera belongs to a day that is ending. We know that war is silly. What could be more stupid than fighting national duels? Everybody knows that war is cruel, ghastly, devilish. What could be more fiendish than settling international disputes by the organized, wholesale slaughter of boys? War is futile. All nations which wage war are losers, they are all bled white. War is suicidal. Science has whetted the sword to so keen an edge that we cannot cut off a nation's ear without cutting our own throat. War is unchristian. It cannot be reconciled with the sermon on the mount or the example of Jesus.

Do not be discouraged, O peace-makers! If God be for us who can be against us? No matter what statesmen may plan or rulers decree, and no matter how Sisera may strut and brag and threaten, or how long he may lord it over parliaments and congresses, the stars in their courses are fighting against him.

III

A third group of the disconsolate are the Christians working for church union. To them union is not only a beautiful ideal but a practical necessity. They see that without union Christianity cannot conquer the world. The problems of our day are too intricate to be solved by one set of fingers. The burdens are too heavy to be borne on the back of one church alone. The evils are too mighty to be overthrown by one regiment of the Lord's army. The day calls for cooperation. The task demands concerted action. Fellowship is of the essence of the Christian religion. It is only in communion with one another that the disciples of Jesus can realize the blessings which he has to bestow.

Those who see this have a passionate longing for the advent of a united church. The present divisions of Christendom are a scandal and a constant grief. The two crowning tragedies of our generation are, in the opinion of many, the refusal of the Roman Catholic church to have anything to do with the conference at Lausanne, and the failure of the Protestants there to show their unity by a united celebration of the Lord's supper.

But there is no doubt—the stars are fighting! Church union is coming, not today or tomorrow—but it is on the way. The denominations are coming closer together, not in organization or in ritual, but in friendly feeling and mutual helpfulness. The denominational fences are lower than they were. It is not the theologians but the stars who have lowered them. The stars have ways of working which we know not of. Church union is not coming in the way we expected. Uniformity will not be a note of the final church. A creedal platform will never be broad enough to hold all who love the Lord.

The stars are fighting against Sisera. Who is he? He

is the spirit of schism, sectarianism, bigotry. The stars are against him. He is doomed. He belongs to the dark ages. He has no rightful place in our modern life. Through the Young Men's Christian Association, and the Young Women's Christian Association, and the Y.P.S.C.E. and the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts and a hundred other organizations, the stars are working for unity. Through summer conferences and winter councils and national conventions and numberless campaigns Christians of all names are being trained to work together for the building of the city of God.

In praying and in working and in loving and in hoping we must not faint. The delays are many, the disappointments are bitter, and the obstacles often seem insurmountable, but nothing is impossible if the stars are with us. Every truth will some day be accepted, and every right will some day be established, and every wrong will some day be righted, and every evil will some day be abolished, not because of the rain and the hail and the river but because of the silent pressure of the steadfast stars.

Four Levels of Faith

By Albert W. Palmer

Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen. Heb. 11:1.

I REMEMBER hearing Professor Charles Mills Gayley, an inspiring teacher of English literature at the University of California, say one day in class: "We all have faith, but the trouble is that not all of us have faith in the faith that we have!" The object of this sermon is to help us all to have faith in the faiths by which, however formless or inarticulate they may be, we nevertheless do carry on the business of living.

By faith I obviously do not mean mere blind uncritical credulity. Faith is not "believing things you know ain't so," as the small boy once defined it. Neither is faith a magical formula, by the mere repetition of which supernatural powers are harnessed to do your bidding. Nor is faith, for our purpose just now, a body of religious dogma, something once for all delivered to the saints.

No, faith is rather "reason in a courageous mood" as L. P. Jacks has somewhere defined it. It is "betting your life there is a God," to use the words of Donald Hankey, "the beloved captain." Or, as Josiah Royce once put it, "faith is the soul's insight or discovery of some reality that enables a man to stand anything that can happen to him in the universe."

Faith is like a broad jump. The broad-jumper does not just walk up to a line and jump. He starts back on the cinder path and runs with increasing speed until he reaches the line and then makes his leap with all the momentum of the run behind him. And he leaps not sideways or obliquely but straight on in the direction in which he has been running. So a man runs as far and as fast as he can along the cinder-path of reason but at last there comes a time when he reaches a line beyond which he cannot run but from which he must make the leap of faith—but he leaps on in the direction toward which his running has given him momentum! No man can know for sure that his wife will be loyal to him through thick and thin, that the sun will rise tomorrow morning, that truth is better than falsehood, that there is a God or that immortality is more than a reasonable hope. On these and a thousand other matters in practical life he has to make the leap of faith—but he makes it in the direction where reason and experience and his noblest insights point the way.

After he has done this a few thousand times in all sorts of circumstances he finally comes to realize that

> It is not wisdom only to be wise
> And on the inner wisdom close the eyes,
> But it is wisdom to believe the heart.

Now this inner and often inarticulate wisdom of the heart, which we call faith, exists on different levels.

I

The first and simplest level of all is what is sometimes called animal faith. But it is not characteristic of the animals alone. It is that natural, un-self-conscious, joyous, instinctive acceptance of life as joyous and good which characterizes the trees and flowers as well as the birds and animals. It is also shared by little children and by all unspoiled, unsophisticated people whose simple trust in the universe has never been clouded by speculative doubt.

I find it in a pine tree that I love on a little island near my summer home in Canada. As you approach the island you admire this tree, so tall, symmetrical and green. Only after you go ashore do you discover that what appeared to be a tree is only one branch of a tree that long ago blew over but retained some roots in a crevice in the rock. Undaunted by disaster, never doubting that it is good to live and struggle, the one branch has grown out of its gnarled and misshapen rootage into a tree.

I hear this instinctive un-self-conscious faith chanted by the birds along a certain road where I love to walk in springtime. Chanted? No, nothing so sedate as that! I hear it sung, shouted, caroled—well, there really is no verb strong enough to suggest the riot of joy and glorious peal of life's goodness which rings out from the throats of a hundred unseen birds along a woodland road.

Little children have this faith. How a growing baby accepts life! How little children adapt themselves to circumstances! How all of nature, unspoiled and unperverted, cries out: It is good to be born! It is good to live! And you and I most of the time, if we are decent normal folks, live our lives too in this inarticulate unconscious faith in the goodness of living.

II

There is a second level: there is human faith—faith in the life of goodness as well as in the goodness of living.

Out of the experience of thousands of years of living together the human race has come with some deep-seated convictions which are shared by all decent, high-minded and responsible men and women. All normal and unperverted human souls believe that truth is better than

falsehood, honesty better than deceit, courage better than cowardice, gentleness better than cruelty, love better than hatred, beauty better than ugliness, and faithfulness better than disloyalty. We cannot absolutely prove these things, and we rarely stop even to try to do so; we just believe out of the background of millenniums of experience that these basic moral ideals are right. We say, as Washington Gladden said in a time of deep trouble and distress:

I know that right is right;
That it is not good to lie;
That love is better than spite,
And a neighbor than a spy;

In the darkest night of the year,
When the stars have all gone out,
That courage is better than fear,
And faith is truer than doubt;

And fierce though the fiends may fight,
And long though the angels hide,
I know that Truth and Right
Have the universe on their side.

How did he know it? He didn't—scientifically. But it is a reasonable and necessary faith—one of the faiths by which men live or, surrendering which, they die.

Last winter I saw a play called "The Devil Passes." It revealed a lot of men and women each with some dominant desire—to be rich, to become a great actress, to be famous, to be let alone and not be bothered by anything. Then the devil passed through the company. To make his disguise complete, I suppose, he appeared in the garb of a clergyman! He offered to each of the people on the stage an opportunity to achieve this dominant desire, but always at the surrender, also, of some personal ideal of self-respecting human conduct. And each one in turn refused. Dominant desires were not to be satisfied at so great a price! All unconsciously they were keeping the faith—faith in goodness, our human faith in certain great ethical ideals of conduct.

III

But faith exists on a third level—there is cosmic faith.

This curious questing human mind of ours looks out on the universe and, wherever it can go, finds evidences of an indwelling energy, an ever-present order, an all-embracing unity and a mighty ongoing process of progressive integration or evolution.

Nature worship is not only a very primitive form of religion, but a very mature one as well. Sophisticated modern men and women have to come to terms with the universe just as much as savages; and cosmic emotion, or at least some emotional response to the vast cosmic order and its processes, grips us all.

Here is where science comes into the picture. Science is not, in itself, a religion or a substitute for religion, however much some people have tried to make it so, but it does provide important and necessary materials which go into the building of our cosmic faith. It has always been so. The man who wrote the simple and childlike account of the creation in the second chapter of Genesis used the science of his day, such as it was; and the man who wrote the later and much more mature and orderly account of creation in the first chapter also used the more rational and organized scientific observation of his day. And we who seek to set forth religion today cannot escape, even if we would, the absolute necessity of an interpretation into their religious values of the facts about the universe as observed and organized by the best science of our day also.

Because our scientific world-view has been changing in such revolutionary fashion in recent years, the forms of our cosmic faith have inevitably changed, too. For a time it seemed to many that scientific studies were revealing nothing but a vast mechanized universe with no room for spiritual values or ideals. Materialism, determinism, mechanism seemed to be the report of scientific research on every side. Happily these tendencies are now abating. On the one side, further exploration of physical reality has revealed it to be less grossly material, less purely mechanical than it seemed at first; and, on the other hand, human thought has awakened to the fact that man himself, with his hopes and dreams, his moral ideals and esthetic judgments, is also an integral part of the universe who must be taken into account in any interpretation of the whole. A thought, an ideal, a sense of value is just as much a part of the cosmic process as a rock or an ocean or a mastodon!

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New sciences are emerging which give a more balanced picture of the whole cosmic order. To mathematics, chemistry, physics and biology we are adding economics, sociology and psychology. A little group of scholarly men sat at the luncheon table of a distinguished physicist last winter and this question went round the table: "Can science point the way to the next step forward in human progress or should there be a

moratorium on science?" The men present represented physics, physiology, agriculture, finance, sociology and theology. The conclusion reached was that, while the physical sciences undoubtedly have great contributions yet to make and should by no means be subjected to a moratorium, the progress of humanity waits on the social sciences. What we need most desperately to know and to make known is what the deepest facts in the universe are concerning economic law, right social relations and effective, well-integrated human thought and behavior.

Now this conclusion in itself is an interesting expression of that deeper cosmic faith which is emerging in our day, for it assumes that there is at the heart of the universe some true and ultimate pattern of what a just and adequate economy would be, of what social relations are conducive to a truly noble, ongoing human life, and what kinds of mental life and activity are productive of harmonious, effective personality.

In other words a new cosmic faith is taking shape under our very eyes, a profound conviction that the universe is not a meaningless drift of fortuitous circumstances but that at the heart of it and pervading its every activity, physical and mental, there is some great all-inclusive ever-present unifying power. The task of the sciences is to discover how this power works in different areas. The task of philosophy is to correlate the results reported by the sciences. The task of religion is to bring men to glad and reverent cooperation with this power, for which it has a name of ever deepening significance, the name of God.

Now this cosmic faith has to struggle, of course, with apparent contradictions—the presence of evil and pain, the maladjustments and unsolved mysteries of the universe. But all these things can be met and explained, or else defied or endured! They are normally recessive and apologetic. In themselves they provide no answers, no consistent interpretation of life. They are like the discordant sounds of belated members of an orchestra tuning up! But we have begun to catch the tune which the orchestra as a whole is playing and we suspect that, when we understand the music better, even some things which now seem to be discords will have place in a larger harmony.

This is our cosmic faith! It brings God into human life as an active contemporary fact to whom our lives must be adjusted and in cooperation with whom there comes a thrilling sense of power, meaning and security. "God is not dead, nor doth he sleep!"

IV

For those of us of the Christian tradition, and ultimately, I believe, for all men, there is still a fourth level of faith. It is faith in Jesus Christ.

After criticism of the most rigorous sort has made its unimpeded study of the gospel narratives, the figure of Jesus still stands serene and clear, all the more compelling and convincing as the outward trappings of omniscience and omnipotence, virgin birth and miraculous credentials, have dropped away. Before the Jesus of the Lord's prayer and the Beatitudes, the Jesus of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, the Jesus of Pilate's judgment hall, Gethsemane and the cross, the Jesus who could not die but walked on the lonely road beside the two who loved him and met the repentant Peter beside the Sea of Galilee, the Jesus who inspired the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians and to know whom John found to be life eternal, the Jesus of St. Francis of Assisi and the Pilgrim fathers, of Wesley and Livingstone, of Kagawa and Albert Schweitzer and of

> All the humble and nameless
> Who the straight hard pathway trod—

before this Jesus the Christian world bows in adoration. After all, the universe produced him! He has to be taken into account in summing it all up. He is the "flower in the crannied wall" of human history to know whom, all in all, is to "know what God and man is."

You cannot escape Jesus, or ignore him. And we are coming increasingly to realize that you cannot deny him and his great ideals of humility, brotherhood, complete commitment to the will of God and sacrificial service of one's fellowmen, without facing disaster in the world of outer social relations and complete chaos within. That Jesus is our index to life's best and highest values —this is faith on the Christian level.

And so the faith of a modern man not only has its roots in the unconscious and instinctive acceptance of life, not only in the tenacious hold on moral human values, not only in its sense of cosmic grandeur in the presence of One who has

> set the Pleiades
> in a silver row

but it has its roots also in the long historic background of human experience as the best and noblest of each century have walked with Jesus and found in him the word of God calling to their souls.

The Coming of a New Religion

By James Gordon Gilkey

A CENTURY ago a new and magnificent cathedral was being built in St. Petersburg. It was dedicated to St. Isaac, one of the holy men of Russia, and the builders ransacked Europe to find gorgeous materials for it. From Germany they brought an immense supply of stained glass, from Italy superb mosaics, and from Finland sixteen huge columns of red marble—each a single block of stone seven feet in diameter and fifty-four feet in length. Those sixteen columns were set at the main entrance of the cathedral to form a portico of surpassing splendor. Within the building were placed five columns of semi-precious stone that were of unrivaled magnificence, two of lapis lazuli and three of malachite. From the ceiling were suspended fifteen huge chandeliers of solid silver, and into the stand which held the copy of the gospels were wrought forty-four pounds of pure gold. Finally, in 1858, the extravagant structure was completed. It had cost forty years of labor and nearly $12,000,000 in cash. St. Isaac's cathedral, the largest and most impressive church in St. Petersburg . . . and what is it today? An anti-religious museum, operated by the soviet government to

discredit the very faith it was originally erected to defend.

One afternoon last August I spent several hours in that museum. Near the entrance the soviet authorities have placed several exhibits designed to show the ignorance of the former worshipers and the duplicity of the former priests. There I saw half-filled bottles which the priests had said contained the tears of the saints, three articles of clothing which the priests had said were worn by the Virgin Mary, and a fragment of stone which—according to the priests—had once been the morsel of bread held by Jesus himself the night of the last supper.

SUPERSTITIOUS RELIGION PASSES

But the most interesting thing in the museum is an elaborate apparatus located in the very center of the building. From the interior of the high dome the soviet authorities have suspended a wire some 250 feet in length. On the end of the wire is a heavy bronze ball, with a sharp pointer underneath. The wire and the ball form a gigantic pendulum which swings slowly and steadily across the face of a circle painted on the floor of the museum. If the earth were stationary that pendulum would, of course, always move in the same path. But since the earth is rotating there is a steady and a perceptible deviation in the line of the pendulum's movement. Minute by minute it moves farther and farther from the path on which it first swung, and in the course of a full day it will—if it is kept in motion—traverse the entire circumference of the circle and return to its starting point. This experiment with a free-swinging pendulum suspended above a fixed and horizontal circle has been performed a million times since the days of Galileo. It is familiar to any college student who has taken even an elementary course in astronomy. But to the uninformed peasants and workmen of Russia that apparatus is strange and fascinating. I saw a group of workers gather round the circular enclosure within which the gigantic pendulum swings, and watch intently while the attendant set the heavy ball in motion. Before their very eyes the moving pendulum slowly left its original path and veered further and further to one side.

What did that prove? The attendant said it proved the priests were liars when for centuries they told the common people of Russia that the earth stands still. It proved that religion itself is a fraud, perpetrated by men who are too lazy to earn their own bread but clever enough to persuade other people to earn it for them. Day after day the great pendulum swings in the ex-cathedral, and day after day it discredits the ignorant, superstitious, anti-scientific religion of the past.

Do many Russians visit the anti-religious museum? I can only report what I myself saw last August. That afternoon scores of individuals were wandering through the building, and two sizable delegations were being led about by official or semi-official guides. The first delegation was composed of about thirty peasants, soldiers and workmen; and was conducted by a young Chinaman who spoke fluent Russian. After listening for a few moments I approached a woman on the edge of the group and asked her in German if she could translate the Chinaman's remarks into either German or English for me. Instantly she began to repeat them in German, and I hurriedly translated her German into English for the other members of our party. In that curiously roundabout way—through an English translation of a German translation of the Russian spoken by a Chinaman—we learned that the speaker was telling his audience of the extravagance of the priests who had built St. Isaac's cathedral, and reminding the audience that every rouble spent on the cathedral had come ultimately from the working-class.

But the other delegation in the museum that afternoon was even more impressive. It was composed of Russian children, most of them in the early teens. They were listening intently while a keen-eyed, cynical-faced guide was explaining the innumerable frauds perpetrated on Russia in the name of religion. The youngsters gathered closely around their guide, laughed heartily at his bitter gibes, and then hurried after him as he moved to the next exhibit.

As I watched that strange scene I realized anew the truth of a statement we had heard many times before we entered Russia. The old Russian religion is dying. It may survive in a few scattered localities and in the hearts of a few elderly people, but as far as the Russia of tomorrow is concerned, it is doomed. Within a few years it will be like the memory of the tsars—a dim and fading dream from an ever-receding world.

WHAT IS THE NEW RELIGION?

But while the old religion has been dying in Russia, an entirely new religion has been emerging in our English-speaking world. This was the fact that bore itself in upon my mind as I studied these vicious attacks on the Russian church and realized they do not reach, and cannot reach, the type of church you and I believe in. The old Russian religion was one thing, liberal American Protestantism is another. This new faith of ours began to emerge more than a century ago, in the teaching of the early Universalists and the early Unitarians. It began to gain definite shape in the middle of the last century, when thoughtful religious leaders sensed the implications of the newly advanced theory of evolution. It attained further form and content in the 1880s and 1890s when a new Bible study and a new social idealism began to alter profoundly men's religious convictions and social objectives. Today our new religion—whether called liberalism, modernism, the new Protestantism or something else—appears clearly in the preaching and the program of literally thousands of progressive churches in this country, Canada, and the British Isles.

What are the significant differences between this new religion and the old? They can be summed up, I think, in four brief statements.

First: the old religion based its teaching on alleged revelation, while the new bases its teaching on the combination of experience and reason. Second: the old religion insisted there is only one road to God, one form of worship, one true church; while the new religion admits there are many roads to God, many forms of worship, and many equally valid churches. Third: the old religion interpreted Jesus as a supernatural Savior who,

by his death on the cross, procured for a few individuals eternal life in another world; while the new religion interprets Jesus as a teacher who, by his wisdom and his example, opened before all men a better way of living here and now. Finally: the old religion often disregarded or even ignored the practical needs of the community and the individual, while the new religion makes the meeting of those needs its major responsibility.

Here are the significant differences between the old religion and the new, between the system represented by the Russian church of yesterday and the system represented by the liberal Protestant church of today. The two religions are essentially and permanently different. No amount of doctrinal juggling or theological legerdemain can make them the same.

Now whenever a liberal discusses and defends this new religion a significant question is sure to be raised. Does this new religion have any spiritual message? Or is it, when all is said, merely the combination of a scheme for ethical instruction and a project for social service?

Some of us are convinced it has a spiritual message, and an immensely significant one. Reduced to its essentials that spiritual message consists of three profoundly important statements.

I

The first is the message of God's reality, God's nearness, and God's love. As we look out on the strange and vast universe by which we are surrounded we note on every side a multitude of animate and inanimate objects, and a host of ever-continuing and curiously interrelated processes. Some people believe these objects and processes represent the sum-total of reality, but we cannot agree. If there is any consistency in experience there must be, behind these objects and processes, some organizing Mind and Power. Whenever, on our human level, we find that objects have been put in order and that processes have been set in motion and directed toward intelligible ends, we infer—somewhere in the situation—the organizing mind and power of a human being. Confronted by a universe that is in order, and by processes which seem to be purposeful, we feel we have the right to make a similar inference. For us God is the Mind and the Power, the organizing Self, working in and through the life-process.

Can we go further and claim this Self is friendly? We believe we can. The world in which we find ourselves seems kindly rather than hostile, and in it we find love emerging as a dominant trait. Centuries ago Jesus argued back from the friendliness he observed in human hearts to a presumable friendliness in the God from whom all life came. "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven!" To us Jesus' logic seems sound. With Jesus we believe in the all-inclusive love of God.

Here is the first part of our gospel—the message that about us is a great Mind-and-Power-and-Goodness on which we can rely, and from which we can draw sustaining wisdom, courage and strength. We are not alone in this puzzling and apparently empty universe. Around us all, whatever our race or creed, is a Love that never fails. Beneath us all, wherever circumstance may bring us, are the Everlasting Arms.

II

The second part of our gospel is a message of the meaning and the splendor of life. Some years ago the students at one of our New England colleges prepared for a visiting preacher a list of the religious questions they wished to have answered. Many familiar and somewhat trivial inquiries appeared on the long sheet, but one question emerged—in varying form—so many times that the preacher finally realized it represented the basic query of that group of young people. "What

James Gordon Gilkey

is the meaning of life?"—that was the question which troubled these students most.

To that question we modernists have a clear and coherent answer. It is radically different from the answer given by the early Protestants, but it is an answer that accords with the new knowledge men have gained since the days of Luther and Calvin. We believe that the purpose of human life is growth—growth in intelligence, skill and kindness. We believe human beings were put here to achieve this growth, and that in this mental and spiritual development lies the secret meaning of our life. Furthermore we are convinced that our environment and the conditions of our existence were deliberately planned in such way that we would be forced to grow, or suffer painful consequences. We must develop intelligence, or nature will annihilate us. We must develop skill, or we shall perish. We must develop kindness, or we shall be ruthlessly shut out from the major satisfactions of life. No one maintains that the scheme-of-things thus designed and brought into existence is either comfortable or safe. But this same

scheme-of-things has forced mental and spiritual growth in human life to an extent that is literally astounding. From a world in which primitive men disclosed almost no intelligence, almost no skill, and almost no kindness, humanity—unaided by any miraculous intervention—has made its way to a world in which the combination of intelligence and skill has mastered and reconstructed the natural environment, and in which an ever-growing kindness has transformed human nature and human relationships.

What the end of this growth-process will be we have no idea. But we are beginning to realize that there actually is, within our reach, a world without poverty, without pain, without injustice, and without war.

What about the individuals who perish, one by one, as the race makes this slow advance? We believe that the purpose of their life too is growth—growth in intelligence, skill and kindness. As the years pass we see our children acquiring, bit by bit, these supreme qualities. As we look back over our own life we realize that our story has been the story of slow advance along these same roads. Death? We modernists can never believe that such a relatively insignificant episode as the breaking up or the wearing out of one little part of a bodily mechanism can negate a growth-process which, up to that moment, seems not only consistent and steady but universal. Therefore we are convinced that every human personality survives the change called death, and in some other area of existence continues its evolution toward a keener intelligence, a greater skill, a wider kindness.

The human race moves steadily forward, in spite of death, along the horizontal line we call racial evolution. The individual moves steadily upward, in spite of death, along the vertical line we call the unending development of personality. Here is the secret meaning of life—the chance to grow. Here is incomparable splendor of life—the chance to gain more and more wisdom, power, and love.

III

The final part of our gospel is a message of God's guidance and help invariably given each human being the moment he starts living at his own best. How and where do these divine reinforcements come? The old religion said they were to be found mainly in the external world. They were, so the old religion maintained, seen chiefly in spectacular redirections of the normal course of outside events. These startling occurrences, commonly termed miracles, took place whenever God arbitrarily decided to interfere in the realm of nature for the benefit of a hard-pressed human favorite.

From such a point of view and the attitude to which it leads, our new religion has definitely and permanently turned away. Our study of the universe has led us to believe there are no such divine redirections of the normal course of events in the external world. Coincidences there may be, but never such miracles as those that formed the stock-in-trade of ancient religion.

Does this mean that we modernists abandon faith in divine guidance and divine help? Certainly not! It means rather that we look for God's assistance in the world within, not the world without. When any one of us grows quiet, puts out of his life and thought all that seems unworthy, and then deliberately tries to rise to his own highest level, what happens? His external situation remains exactly what it was before, but how different his inner life becomes! Wisdom, old or new, emerges within his quiet mind. Ideals, old or new, rise in starlike loveliness before his waiting spirit. Strength and courage, old or new, flow into his silent heart. Here is God's guidance, here is God's help. Coming not through a change in the world without, but through a change in the equally significant world within.

"Some thoughts from God, old or new, will knock today at the door of my mind. Duties and opportunities of God's devising will meet me along the road of the hours. Let me enter this new day open-eyed, open-eared, open-hearted. God himself is looking for me. I may miss him in the disguise of the commonplace, and I may overlook him in the unfamiliar and the new. But God himself is here, seeking me. Let me have Christ's wisdom, Christ's kindness, Christ's freedom from pettiness, prejudice, and self-absorption. Then God can make his thoughts my thoughts, and guide me to the place he wants me to fill."

Borrowed Troubles

By Russell Henry Stafford

Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Matthew 6:34.

I WONDER how much a year it costs Mr. Gandhi to live? I have no idea what rent he pays. But certainly under the hot Indian sun he has no fuel bill, except for cooking. And he eats next to nothing, and wears hardly any clothes. If I were in Mr. Gandhi's place, I don't believe I should worry much about the future.

How much do you suppose it cost Jesus to live? Less than it costs Mr. Gandhi. For the Indian sage has a wife, but Jesus was not married. Nor had he any expenses for travel, since his country was not a vast empire but a little corner of earth which could be traversed on foot. He had no far-reaching and therefore expensive public responsibilities; no huge correspondence devouring piles of stamps and stationery, for instance, as Mr. Gandhi must have. He too lived on a simple diet in a warm land. And wherever he went he and his disciples were entertained free of charge, or received contributions sufficient for necessities. Surely it is not surprising that Jesus could not see the point in panic at the thought of tomorrow and the day after.

But we live where fuel, warm clothing, secure shelter and a varied regimen of foods are essential to protect and fortify us against a rigorous climate. And most of us have family responsibilities which we could not sidestep with honor even if we wanted to. So it would appear that we have more reason to view the days ahead with alarm than Jesus had.

Suppose Jesus were living today in New England,

had a wife and several children, and were out of a job, or had secured an underpaid position after a long period of unemployment which had used up all his reserves. Suppose he were already in middle life or beyond, and in addition to the day-by-day economic struggle had to fight a tendency to think of himself as a failure, realizing that he was past the usual age for business success. Suppose he could see nothing ahead but a losing fight to hold his own, and finally the poorhouse. Would he still think it was folly to look ahead and be afraid of what he saw?

OUR ECONOMIC STRUGGLE

Or suppose Jesus were among us in the twentieth century as a retired elderly man, with wealth inherited or accumulated long since, living on the income of investments in a big house with many servants, and with sons and daughters who through ill health or misfortune were dependent upon him. Dividends have shrunk to fractions of what they used to be, and some of his gilt-edged securities are yielding nothing at all. But he has nowhere to live but that big house, with its huge overhead. He cannot shut off most of the rooms and live in only two or three of them, for there is no way to shut them off. He cannot move out of his house into a cheap apartment, for if he did he would be complicating a general housing situation already unsatisfactory, and he would also have to discharge his servants, who would then be without home or livelihood, and would be added to the number of the jobless on some sort of dole. So he is putting a good face on grim necessity, and keeping up his establishment by cutting sharply into his principal. But that is a process which cannot go on forever, and there will be nothing left for the children who cannot take care of themselves. If Jesus were in that situation, like a great many people these days, wouldn't he worry?

No, I don't think he would. I think he would still maintain that to borrow trouble from what might happen later on was a needless addition to the problem to be faced today; and that it would be useless and foolish anyway, since we never know what is going to come, or when things will take a turn for the better. And I believe he would practice what he preached. But then, Jesus did not attach nearly as much importance to money and the things money will buy as we do.

WHERE MONEY IS KING

It is characteristic of our competitive industrial civilization that we care more about money, feel more pride in having it and more shame in lacking it, than anything else. The most unendurable affront to our self-respect is that anyone should be sorry for us because we are poor. Strangely, we rather like to be pitied on other grounds. I have known people to parade and dramatize bereavement, because it is a compliment to our sensibilities to be pitied for our grief. And there are many who are always ailing, and talking about their aches and pains real or unreal, because sympathy is a tribute to their importance. But we all draw the line at inviting compassion because we are hard up, unless we have lost all shame. For money is the gauge of achievement in the world we live in.

So was it also, however, in the Roman empire, of which Jesus was a subject. It too was a world of business, of the exploitation of man by man from the profit motive, of display and gorgeousness. If you will read Ferrero's "Greatness and Decline of Rome," you will be struck by the almost American aggressiveness of competing industrial and commercial interests in that time of Rome's vigor and brilliance when Jesus was living in a Roman province—a period politically suggestive of the rococo parvenu empire of Napoleon III, and financially of the United States before October 1929.

But Jesus, though he was in that world, was not of it. To him it seemed hollow and unreal. His whole theory of life was that real people and the people with real money, as we say, were by no means always the same people. He had found the kingdom of God, the kingdom of character and immortal personality, and that was the realm he chose to live in. He was incapable of being proud to have money or humiliated to lack it. He was not afraid of the poorhouse. He saw evidence that among paupers there might be as much character as in the palaces of nobles and millionaires. So he would always be getting what he wanted out of life, as long as he lived, whether he knew where his next meal was coming from or not; and if supplies ever stopped entirely, he was not afraid to die. No wonder he never worried.

And yet it is wonderful, after all. For he had other things besides money to worry about, if he had thought it worth while. How indicative it is of our mercenary viewpoint, that we should be tempted (if we dare be frank about it) to regard Jesus as a simpleton because food and raiment counted for so little in his eyes, and at the same time as a man to be envied because in a subtropical climate and living with the lower classes he needed so little for health and comfort!

JESUS A PRACTICAL DREAMER

Jesus was a dreamer, to be sure; but not all dreamers are simpletons. In fact, all men of achievement must be dreamers first. From Jesus' dream, through the initial expenditure of his own energy as teacher and leader, started a movement which in less than three centuries conquered the Roman empire, and which dominates the thought-life of mankind today whether they will or no. A man who gets results like that is no man's fool.

Moreover, the movement this man started could not go ahead except over his dead body, and he knew it. His very life was at stake and would be forfeited, as he realized only too clearly for a long time before his enemies finally closed in on him. Many of his friends and one of his intimates were to go back on him, as the catastrophe drew near; and, with an insight into the crooked processes of human nature which in a lesser man would have amounted to cynicism, he foresaw it all in advance. It was no carefree boy-poet generalizing his own privileged independence who chanted that singing line, "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow," but a masterful thinker, a great general of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, approaching with foreknowledge the culmination of his trials. So his

maxim deserves, not flippant and half-resentful dismissal as if he did not know what he was talking about, but at the very least our respectful consideration.

I do not take it that Jesus meant that we are not even to think of the future, and plan for it as best we can, as the unaccountable mistranslation of the authorized version would suggest—"Take no thought for the morrow." That would indeed sound like a commendation of improvidence; and the improvident man is not a good citizen or a good neighbor. In fact we know that Jesus did plan ahead, as when he sent out the seventy, when he began preparing the minds of the twelve some months

Russell Henry Stafford

before for the shock of his crucifixion, and when he went up deliberately to Jerusalem to meet his fate.

Every man with any sense will think of what is likely to come, and what he had better do about it, if indeed there is anything at all that he can do. That is as true in money matters as in anything else, if money is a vital factor in our calculations, as it obviously is when we have dependents to support or other material obligations to meet. But planning and worrying are not the same thing.

In all planning there is a frankly tentative or provisional element: "If things work out so and so, what I ought to do is such and such." And into all sensible planning there enters a certain trustfulness as to the general trend of the universe: "The worst is not likely to happen; there will very likely be advantages and opportunities presented also of which I can avail myself to offset any misfortunes which arrive, if I keep myself fit and have my wits about me; and, even if the worst does happen from my present point of view, there is sure to be some way out." That is a practical form of faith in God, who presides over all destinies; and it is a faith which all our observation up to this point has amply justified. We have found thus far that things do work out, though often in surprising ways; and we are even distinctly better off for some of the untoward things which struck us as unmitigated disasters when they happened to us.

"Sufficient unto the day"

In making tentative plans, we take all this into account. But in worrying about the future we forget that there are any grounds for trust and hope. We conjure up all the awful things that might befall us, and then we invite them to come by succumbing to the terror they inspire in us, so that we are in no condition to ward them off.

Suppose we grant that some of these awful things may really happen. If and when they happened, could they possibly terrify us as much as it does to anticipate them? While they are still in the offing, there is something ghostly about them; and no man ever yet saw a ghost without his knees knocking together. But when we come to grips with these troubles we find that they are concrete; and we can wrestle with flesh and blood, so to speak, and by putting in all the punch we have, and all the skill, we can usually win out. Probably that is one of the ideas behind the whimsical humor of Jesus' comment, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Literally that means, "You have trouble enough now, without borrowing any," which is true enough for most of us, and shows that Jesus was not overlooking the dark side of life. But it also suggests that we know what to do about present troubles—how to handle them, or even to surrender to them gracefully, so that we are not much the worse for the experience; and that that will be true tomorrow, too, whereas we cannot possibly know how to deal with tomorrow's troubles until tomorrow comes with all its modifying conditions and in its actuality, so that we would better use our powers on the tasks in hand instead of paralyzing them with nightmares of the future.

Life, after all, is good

To plan effectively for tomorrow involves a certain detachment from circumstance. In other words, we cannot even be prudent unless we hold firmly to the understanding that we are not to be identified with what happens to us. Whatever happens to us, we shall survive; we shall live to fight another day. We must not let ourselves get too deeply involved emotionally in the course of mere outward events. However unpleasant they may be, we can endure them, and even wrest a blessing from them as we pursue our forward journey. Even if worse came to worst, on the day after the storm we should see the sunshine again. Not death itself can down us; for we are not our bodies, but we live on forever, though our bodies properly enough return to the dust out of which under God we made them, when we are through with them.

And yet we go on worrying. Some of us worry so much that we have hardly any time left to enjoy what good things we may have. When good things come, we

worry about the day when they will be taken away. A man said to me recently: "Yes, it is true that my business has improved; but of course it is only temporary." "Yes," said I, "and so is life on earth too, for that matter. But if improvement has come now, why not look for further lucky breaks ahead, instead of expecting always to lose what you've won at the next turn of the wheel? Life is not a gamble; God is our guarantor of final gain!"

THE CURSE OF WORRY

We worry about money. And worry takes the edge off of our normal and legitimate shrewdness, so that we become misers or easy marks.

We worry about health. And worry actually produces functional disorders which, given time enough under the same encouragement, can ultimately upset the whole organism. Why worry? Are you so afraid of being sick? It is almost worth while to be sick now and then, for the fun of being well again! Are you afraid you have an incurable and fatal disease? Go to a doctor and find out. Then dismiss the fancy, if he says it is groundless. Or make up your mind to it, if his report confirms your apprehension. In either case you will be much happier than while you are giving free rein to a diseased imagination.

We worry about our friends. Do they really care for us, and will they be abidingly loyal? There is no way of telling at the outset. But the way to hold them is to be loyal ourselves and to show that we trust them, instead of foolishly calling out the worst in them by expecting it.

So not only is most worry unwarranted by the sequel—for things do usually turn out tolerably well, if we do not demand the impossible or are overfond of mere things which perish in the using—but some worry is actually provocative of the misfortunes it dreads. The best way to keep our feet on the ground instead of falling into a pit of our own digging is to live one day at a time, while we plan for the days ahead in the spirit of a game instead of under the scourge of that fear which belies the faith which we profess in God's providential care.

JESUS A GOOD ADVISER

We have real troubles today, and we shall doubtless have real troubles in the future. Our troubles are not more severe than were those of Jesus. He has a right to advise us, for life was harder on him than it will ever be on us. When he bids us trust instead of dreading, our common sense tells us that he is right. When he tells us that we can afford to depend on God, his faith kindles new faith in our hearts. He speaks for God when he declares that it is no part of the divine plan for us to bear the burdens of the future in the present, and that to stop worrying is a big item in our undertaking to yield obedience to our Heavenly Father's will.

At once rebuked and encouraged by our Master's words, we must stop paying interest on borrowed troubles, and begin living now in such a way that we shall be strong and capable to cope with whatever tomorrow may bring for the testing of our manhood and to develop the fiber of our character.

The Quiet Mind

By Carl S. Patton

Why art thou disquieted within me, O my soul? Psalm 42:56.

WE are all familiar with the difference between the quiet and the unquiet mind. Abraham Lincoln, for example, was a man of quiet mind; whatever happened outwardly, some deep pool always remained unstirred within him. Stanton, on the contrary, had an unquiet mind; not mad all the time, but always ready to get mad. General Grant was a quiet man. General Meade was a noisy one. And nearer home we all know people who are stirred up, roiled, distracted, most of the time; and sometimes we are like that ourselves. And we know other people who are cool, calm, collected, quiet—and sometimes we are that way, also.

You may say: "What of it? Life is a practical affair. If we get the dishes done, the clothes mended, the goods sold, the taxes paid, what difference does it make what state of mind we are in?"

I reply, all the difference in the world. For in the first place, the people with quiet minds get more things done and get them done more easily. Agitation wears us out. Anger burns us up. A fit of temper will sometimes kill a man, and people who are mad most of the time do not live out their natural days. Unquiet people burn out their own bearings. The quiet mind runs smoothly.

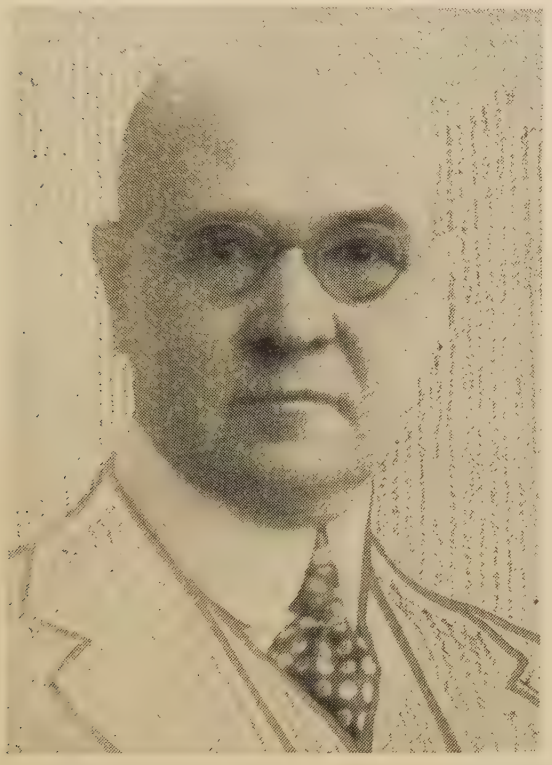
Even if this were not true, we are here not merely to get things done, but to live, and to be lived with. And these folks who are seldom or never quiet; who are all shavings and kindling—and a match dropped anywhere near them sets them off; and in whom you may explode a mine when you least suspect it—they may be good for our discipline, perhaps.

OUR NOISY AGE

Wouldn't it be easier, at least, as the Rig Veda says, "to wander alone like a rhinoceros," than to live with them? And for yourself, what enjoyment can you get out of life if you are stirred up about it most of the time?

There is not much in our times or our environment to compel, or even invite us, to be quiet if we do not want to. The plains of Tekoa where Amos tended his fig trees, the desert where John the Baptist went, even the old-fashioned farmhouse in the woods or on the prairie, probably helped to keep people quiet. But the present generation, especially in the cities, is no natural friend to peace. It talks too much, too fast and too loud, and runs the radio too continuously, for that. It has too many street cars, automobiles, airplanes, and makes too many new-fangled noises never heard in the world before. A kind of booming, roaring, confusing, distracting place. If you want to be quiet, how can you get any help from people who have more places to go than they can possibly get to, and therefore are always in a hurry? It is only once in a while that any of us drops into the dentist's chair and relaxes. If anybody wants to have a quiet mind these days, I take it he will have to do something about it himself. But what can he do?

Well, one of the greatest helps toward a quiet mind is, fortunately, within the reach of us all; it is the simple process of growing old. Noise is the natural element of childhood. Adolescence is a period of storm and stress. We do not talk so loudly, nor gesticulate so wildly, at sixty as we did at sixteen. This is not because our powers are slowing down; we probably could still shout and be fussy if we wanted to. But we made so much ado in our earlier years about things we now see were not important; we know so much better now than we once did how much energy it takes to live, and how foolish it is to waste it; we have more to think about; we have come, as Wordsworth says, to "the years that



CARL S. PATTON

bring the philosophical mind." Years naturally bring it. From about the age of eighteen or twenty, the amount of clatter we make steadily declines. A noisy boy is normal; a noisy man is abnormal. Old people are usually gentle and quiet. You have few quarrels with anyone over anything after you are sixty. After that almost anything you could gain by a squabble is worth less than the inner peace the squabble would cost you.

When I am "all het up" about something, my mind fluttering like a chicken yard with a hawk circling above it, then if I go to call on some old lady who has seen three or four generations born and the larger part of two or three of them die, and who knows how little there is to get excited about—I quiet down as quickly as I did sixty years ago when my mother took me in her arms. It is not merely that we talk more gently and behave more quietly as we grow older. These things are a reflection of our spirits and react upon them. Our minds are quieter. We have more sense. We know better what is worth making a fuss about and what is not. There are other advantages about growing old. But this is one on whose account I recommend the process to all of you, and advise you not to fight against it. God will give you with it, if you will let him, serenity, quietness, and peace in your own soul. I can even see these things coming for myself as I look ahead; they are nearer than they used to be—though of course, I am still too young!

But we cannot wait for age to bring these desired boons. Isn't there anything we can do about it in the meantime? Certainly there is.

THE PROFIT OF SOLITUDE

In the first place, probably most of us are not alone often enough. We are in the crowd all day and sometimes all the evening. Our entertainment and even our culture we seek in the mass. It involves no criticism upon any institution; but if you want a culture of your own soul and not merely to know who has written this or that, you will get more by sitting down in your own room and reading a good book, especially a good, old book that has lived through many generations, all by yourself, than by hurrying to some place where, the babble of multitudinous voices being momentarily stilled by the gavel, you hear one person review fourteen books in forty minutes.

Of course, this being quiet and alone can be overdone. A good woman once said to me: "My husband's idea of a gay evening is to sit in his big chair, with his book, while I sit on the other side of the table and sew, and our daughter gets her lessons for the next day. All evening he will not say a word, except when I leave the room for a moment, when he will say to our daughter, 'Where has your mother gone?' " We have to have some evenings like that. But few folks have too many of that kind, these days.

And second: There are places that help to still our spirits. Nobody shouts at the Riverside Mission Inn. It was reported of one boy who had never been known to speak softly, that in the Lincoln Memorial building in Washington he whispered to his mother. To sit in a church even when it is full of people, and to listen quietly—so long as the preacher is not dull enough to irritate you—quiets a man down. The mountain top, the seashore, the country road, do the same thing for him; but especially great buildings when they are empty, or when the people in them are still. You come out of Ely or Lincoln Cathedral quieter than you went in. The man of troubles steps into a Catholic church off the glare of the street, kneels for an instant, sits quietly for a few minutes, and goes out stilled, collected and reinforced.

A LESSON FROM THE BUDDHISTS

A traveler in Burma speaks of such scenes in the Buddhist temples there, and comments: "There is no priest there, no congregational singing or responsive reading. A family may come in together, their wives hushed in reverence as they take off their straw sandals and enter the little shrine. Each bears in his hand a flower or a candle. Before the altar, where sits the Buddha on his lotus, they bow, touching the floor with their heads; then seated before him, hands pressed to-

gether in the attitude of prayer, and holding thus the flower or candle, they recite half aloud or silently some verses they have learned from the monk, or some petition of their own. They sit a few moments in silence, gazing at the Buddha. The prayer and meditation finished, they place the flower or candle upon the altar before the Blessed One, and go back to their work or their play, and, I suspect, with a calmness of spirit they did not feel before." So Buddha himself sat under the Bo tree. So Jesus sought the quiet of the mountains in the stillness of the night.

Which leads me to say that it has always been the aim of religion to cultivate the quiet mind. Monasticism, with its isolation and its love of silences; mysticism, in which the soul retires into itself, and all ties to earth are momentarily severed; methods of contemplation in which the spirit shuts itself off from the glare and noise of the world; sacred words to be repeated; exercises that take the mind away from the things of sense and time—all these, common to all great religions, speak of the universal need of spiritual peace, and of the effort of religion in all ages to help people toward it. We are so over-intellectual, and so over-busy in our modern religion, so afraid of believing something that isn't so, or of forgetting something that ought to be done for society, that outside the Catholic and Quaker churches we do not do so much for the peace of people's minds as we might.

GETTING AWAY FROM THINGS

The desire for clear thinking and the passion for social righteousness are noble things. I can even sympathize with a statement I once heard that the trouble with Christians today is that there are too many of them who can sleep nights. But fussiness does not get us anywhere. No spiritual power is generated by mere agitation. It is not necessary always even to understand. Professor Pratt in his book on Buddhism observes that the Buddhist worshiper is often ignorant of the words he is pronouncing. "This at one time," he says, "would have seemed to me like mere superstition. I have since learned that it may be a genuine spiritual experience. I remember hearing the voice of a woman in a lonely shrine in Mandalay, shrill and clear and impassioned, with the heart's longing in every syllable, appealing to the Lord Buddha, repeating her prayer over and over, intensely, wildly, filling all the courtyard of the deserted temple. The prayer was a Pali, and very likely she understood not a word of what she said. Not a word, perhaps; but she understood the prayer. The seemingly meaningless words, sacred to her since childhood's days, she took and filled with a meaning of her own."

Dr. Pratt asked a monk in a Chinese temple whether he knew the meaning of the prayer which he repeated many hundreds of times each day. He replied that he did not. "But," he said, "it helps your heart to say it over and over when you are in trouble." Most of the soldiers in hospital during the war, when they wanted to pray, said "Now I lay me down to sleep." It was the only prayer they knew. It had no application to their present situation. But it seemed to do them as much good as more appropriate words would have done.

What is it in religion that ministers to the quiet mind? It is, as I have intimated, its power to woo us away from things that trouble us. That in itself is much. But one can get that by playing chess, or reading a book, or working a picture puzzle. It is much more, very much more than that. It is the sense which religion gives us of the fleeting nature of all merely worldly goods, the glimpse of eternal values and verities, the consciousness of one's own life as part of a great ongoing spiritual order, born of infinite wisdom and love. It is something that has power, as Wordsworth says, "to make our noisy years seem moments in the being of the eternal silence," and gives us the feeling of being borne up upon the waves of a spiritual power past all our finding out.

Have you any seed of real religion in you? Keep your own foot off it, and set it where the jostling tramp of a busy world can not tread it down. Dig around it. Water it with the tears of your repentance and the gentle dew of your prayers; and it will yield you in the end the blessed fruit of "the peace that passeth understanding."

On the Edge of the Crowd

By Allan Knight Chalmers

And there followed him great multitudes of people. Matthew 4:25.

WE have always judged Jesus by the inner circle: the inner circle of discipleship, and the inner circle of opposition. We talk of Peter and James and John—of Thomas and Judas—of—of Matthew—of —of—of Philip—more "ofs" before we say Andrew and—and—"Oh, who were the rest of them anyway?"

"There followed him great multitudes of people," but we talk of his effect upon those who stayed behind after the crowd went and became his violent partisans, leaving all to follow him.

Or we judge him by those who reacted violently against him and his message. There is a proverb about "fear the man who has no enemies." "I've never met him," a man said to me about another man, "but I think I would like him from the kind of enemies he has."

This is a valid way to judge a man. Read that poem of Alfred Noyes, "The Death of a Great Man." It is too concentrated to give from the pulpit. He starts off by saying that the realization of the greatness of a man comes not in the sense of shock that he is dead, as you see the news in the headlines. That means so little. We all know that because we ourselves have said, all in the same breath, "Wasn't that sudden about——?" and "Did you bring the jig-saw puzzle?" Noyes, in more universal phrase writes this casualness into a line, "So he is dead," and "Is it going to rain?"

Neither is a great man shown because we fly flags at half-mast for a month while orators say, "All the world stands weeping at his tomb."

> London is dining, dancing through it all
> And in the unchecked smiles along the street
> Where men, that lightly knew him, lightly meet,
> There is no jot of grief, no tittle of pain.

"No," says Noyes, "the greatness of a man is told by two things: the pride of those who glory in life because they knew him," and "that strange, that dreadful light upon many faces—the peace (the relieved peace) upon the faces of his foes."

TESTS OF GREATNESS

Let us be careful not to exaggerate this truly wise observation about life. The person who tests his life, as some do, mainly by the opposition he arouses, is not quite sane. If you are interested in truth, if you believe there is a right way of life, you do not want people to fight you. Opposition is distasteful to men on the march. Who, knowing the goal to be reached and feeling the need of haste in getting people there, can be so stupid as to enjoy the friction of guerilla warfare as he travels the way? Only people not sure of the end enjoy the struggle by the wayside. That, you see, allows them to be much occupied with apparently important business and postpones the ultimate exposure of their ignorance of what they do.

Noyes is, however, right so far: a man's greatness can be tested by the love he arouses and the hate he causes; and these two tests are made in the life and death of Jesus. Right it is that we should think and talk of Jesus mainly in his influence upon partisan and opponent. Obviously we have to. You cannot talk of things off the record. As fellow-citizen Smith wisely used to point out, "We have to go to the record."

But in that judgment we must not forget to notice, in the account, the entries so lightly made that we often neglect them.

There is a third test. What does Jesus do to those who choose neither the high road nor the low road? What is the effect upon "the rest," who "in between on the misty flats . . . drift to and fro?" What does he do to the man on the edge of the crowd who never comes into the inner circle of discipleship?

JESUS DISTURBED MEN

It is well for us to probe with a sympathetic and disciplined imagination into his effect upon those casually mentioned in his record. It is not hard to understand why Nicodemus hesitated on the edge of the crowd. But why did not Lazarus become a more vital adherent of his cause? And Barabbas—what effect did Jesus have on him? What happened to the centurion—and to the rich young ruler? If we could only know the rest of the story about them!

We do not doubt that Jesus disturbed them. This was one of his constants. *He troubled men!* The words are hardly strong enough. He made them wonder about themselves. He made them question life as they knew it. In the case of so many it seemed to make no immediate difference in what they did, but the feeling is persistent that they were never quite the same again.

He put the element of discontent into life. How queer that sounds to say about him who spoke of the peace of God! Yet it is true that there is no peace except in that radical reorganization and centralizing of man's whole manner of life upon the idea of the perfect.

Jesus therefore, by the very nature of truth, added to man the element of discontent with himself. Louis the Great once said to the court preacher: "Massillon, I have heard many great preachers and have gone away satisfied with them. But every time I have heard you, I have gone away dissatisfied with myself." Here is expressed the quality Jesus added to life. Massillon was a good witness of him in whose name he spoke. If we are rightly to represent him in this world we too must add that element of divine discontent to life.

But we must do more than that. Unless we win transformation, at last, in the multitude, we have no final message. To remain content throughout eternity with the rôle of court jester or chaplain to Man the King, would be absurd.

WINNING THE MULTITUDES

Unless we gain adherence, in the multitude, to our faith, we are only a respectable gesture on the Great White Way, as is one (and only one) Jew in a fashionable club a pretense of a tolerance that emphasizes our intolerance. Our acceptance of a fact—that the multitude prefers the House of Roxy to the House of God—should not become for us a complacency. True, we do not want the multitude to come because we catered to any low desire which cheapens our emphasis. True, we would rather have ten convinced followers than a thousand nominal ones. But when we discover, as we do, that these who do come out of the crowd and become disciples are truly representative of the multitude—we mean by that that they are not better, not different, but of the rank and file of the crowd—it does not lower the value of these we know, but expresses faith in the fundamental goodness of men and their hunger and thirst after reality, and puts the pain of a wonder about why we cannot get all men to see. If the disciples, why not the multitude too? They are the same substance.

When we look upon some of these who last month, or last year, or last decade, were among those lost in this same throng which now passes by, but, not of that crowd today, are vital in the inner circle of some spiritual fellowship—it makes us ache for greater insight and a more compelling passion. Jesus must have thought of Jeremiah's words, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" as he wept over Jerusalem.

Why, oh why, do these come out of the crowd for a moment only? They look over the shoulders of others from the edge of the crowd—and go away. Why?

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

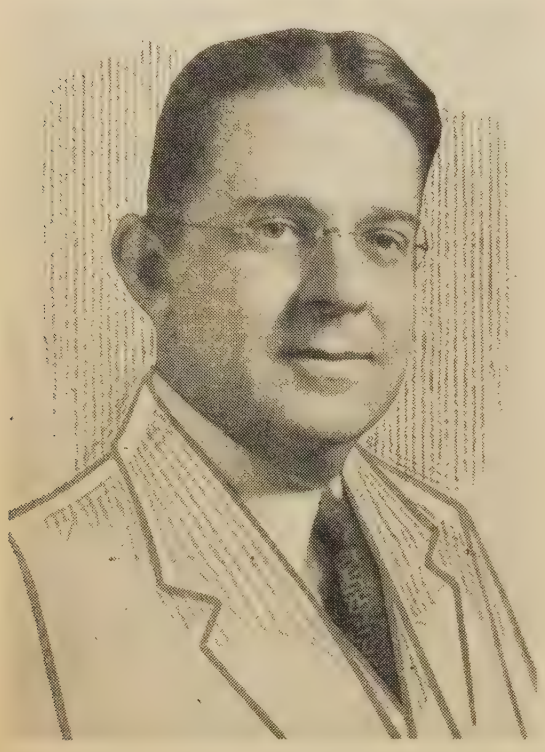
The multitudes must have caused Jesus' heart to ache. It is quite legitimate to try to think his thoughts after him. We take an anonymous member of the crowd with which to illustrate. We know the names, at least, of some of them, but this first one has no name.

That scene of the rich young ruler coming out of the crowd is so typical of our moods. "Master—why, you are a Master!" he says it with a tone of inward surprise, realizing after he has said it how much truer it is than he had thought—"Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Then, when Jesus told him, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

The disciples must have thought about that incident many times. "What was the trouble with that rich

young ruler?" . . . "Why did Jesus send him away? At least, he might have been easier with him in the beginning." . . . "Couldn't we use his money, though!" . . . "And it would have helped with the four hundred if we had corralled him!" . . . "It's all very well to talk about this business of the meek and lowly, but we must take man as he is. Man plays 'follow the leader,' and that young fellow was a bellwether if ever I saw one!"

One of them must have said something like this to him one day: "We don't mean to criticize, but, really, you know, we needed that young fellow—what's his name?—you remember, the one that came up to you after that street crowd the other day. . . . And, while I'm on it, do you think it quite wise to carry your principle of freedom so far that you will continue to alienate some of these good people brought up on the ceremonial law on Sabbath observance, and such things?"



Allan Knight Chalmers

Yes, if men were the same then as they are today, someone must have said something like that.

And Jesus must have—oh, I hope he did think about the rich young ruler too! Here was the truth, full, strong, uplifting. . . . And man, to be free of fear—user, not prisoner of, possessions. "But he shrank from it. It is so clear, but he shrank from it. Is man so weak, then, that he must be shielded from the light?"

His mind went on to assert a truth: "It is not enough that men who have nothing should see that having nothing is not of all things most dreadful. It is not enough that desperate men should try My Way because they have no other way they can try. Life is only worthy as it is chosen. Some of these who follow Me, fine though their spirit is, are following Me because it is the only open door. But the way is truly tested only when men have many doors they might enter, and choose this one. Man must see the choice and be free to make it."

MAN MUST BE FREE TO CHOOSE

There is a striking word picture in Middleton Murry's "Jesus Man of Genius." It pictures the lonely God at the end of a long corridor behind a great curtain waiting for man to come near enough so that God could speak to him. In beautiful prose the author makes you feel the awful tension of man's footsteps sounding hollowly on the bare floor of the echoing corridor as man dares a little further toward the deepening gloom of the corridor's end. Time and again God's aching heart longed for man to pass the curtain that the Word might be spoken but always there was fear before the end, and the sound of retreating footsteps until Jesus came. He, daring to pass the veil, let the lonely heart of God find rest.

But at the risk of marring the solemn simplicity of that striking picture we should always add doors to the corridor, through which man might go, if he liked: a library door, a game room, a care-free party where there is dancing—and light laughter and good companions. Bad ones, too, because the doors of sinister delight and soft allure are open there as man goes down the corridors of time.

Middleton Murry's picture needs this truth. It is more realistic. God is not a lonely desperate searching in the dark. He must be chosen over many things that are good in themselves, though not enough in themselves.

How often Jesus must have thought of things like this! He gives us hint of it in his parable of the pearl of great price. His mind, steeped in the words of his race's religious experience, might have dwelt in this connection upon the song of the chosen people in captivity: "If I prefer not thee, O Holy City of God, above my chief joy." There is the test of any truth, of any way, of any life. Chosen—preferred—above many joys—above the chief joy. It was well said by someone: "The secret of life is to discover what one will put before oneself."

WHEN THE CURTAIN GOES DOWN

Here, then, on the edge of the crowd, was one who was worthy of the test but who failed then. I wish we knew the end. What did the rich young ruler do—afterwards? What is he doing—today? Will he ever become what Jesus saw in him?

Our minds go on to think of many stories which, if they had stopped as this story stopped, would have stopped all too soon. If the story of Peter had ended in Pilate's court, how tragic a failure that life would have been! If that night had closed down like a stage curtain on Jerry McCauley lying in a gutter and no day had ever risen, the world would have had only the memory of a Bowery bum to document its pessimism. You see the curtain go down on any life here at this moment, and you will not have cause for exuberant belief in man. Out of a world of chaos and despair, of prejudice and pessimism, we have come; back to that world in a moment or two we shall go. Go—how?

With what faith in man? With what passion to rest not until the multitude sees what we see? Suppose our story ended now as in the passing throng we look on Jesus for a moment and go our ways?

How he did it we do not know, but that he did it we can see, and because he did it, we are led to wonder and to hope that his faith in man as a vessel into which truth can be poured, was justified. He, the daring joy of the world, stood in the midst of the crowd. He found men with eyes who saw not; with ears who heard not; with life who lived not; with health but were not well; with wealth but were not rich; they stood in the midst of time and forgot it was a part of eternity; and they were afraid.

JESUS' CONFIDENCE IN MEN

But there in the midst of the crowd Jesus sent forth his light—confident that men would choose it in the end; that the darkness could not blot it out. His supreme confidence in that fact is undoubtedly a part of his secret. All men over whom the light of that life poured knew that somehow life had to be different—not always better, because, fearing, they sometimes ran away—but different. The poet knew when he said:

> I saw him once. He stood a moment there.
> He said one word that laid my spirit bare.
> He grasped my hand, then passed beyond my ken,
> But what I was, I shall not be again.

Jesus dared to wait. He must have realized what men would say about him in time because out of the multitudes who came, so many went away. Yet he knew that the love, which ever seems to fail in the ticking of a clock—will fail tomorrow, did fail yesterday—would not fail in the end.

It is well for us to catch some moments out of the moving picture of life. To watch the crowd who so often seem to fail—at least, they only partially succeed. We can read the roll of the men of the multitude and recognize in these men our own moods; and through understanding, not blame, may be able to see ourselves as we hesitate here on the edge of the crowd.

The Congregational-Christian Number

The ministers whose sermons appear in this issue were selected, not by the Editor of The Pulpit, but as the result of a ballot sent to the more than 7,000 ministers listed in the Congregational-Christian year book. These ministers were asked to name the preachers whom they would like to have represent their denomination in this special Congregational-Christian Number. The Christian Century Pulpit honors itself in extending its hospitality to these great preachers whom their brethren have delighted thus to honor. Among those selected by the ballot were Dr. S. Parkes Cadman of Brooklyn and Dr. Charles R. Brown of Yale Divinity School, who, however, were unable to contribute sermons to this issue.

The Religious Wise Man

By Albert Buckner Coe

Who is as the wise man? Ecclesiastes 8:1.

THE world is in search of its wise men. It is not a new search. Diogenes with his lantern searching out an honest man gave only a pale picture of the constant and zealous quest of antiquity for the truly wise man. Our religious forbears craved wisdom. Several of the books of our Bible, including the apocrypha, emphasize wisdom. In more recent times we have seen the emphasis placed upon the wise man as he applies himself to various and highly specialized fields. We are today debtor to the wise man in science, the wise man in medicine and the wise man in philosophy.

The particular appeal of this sermon is for the wise men in religion. We have failed to emphasize wisdom in this field and, as a result, the future of religion is being discussed with tongue in cheek by the religious enthusiast as well as the religious skeptic. Let us here search out whatever folly may be in religion and cry aloud for wise men who will lead the way in strengthening the walls of the religious city.

RELIGION AND OUR WORLD

But our concern is not simply that the walls of the religious city be strengthened. Religion is not an end in itself—a balloon to be blown up that all may behold it. It is important chiefly as it relates itself to our world. If the world is paradise, let religion take care of itself. What then of the world? In Shakespeare's "Richard III" we find a situation that fits the world as it is today. The king is dead. Two citizens are talking anxiously of the calamity. They admit that times are bad and reveal two ways of dealing with the crisis:

> First citizen—Come. Come. We fear the worst. All will be well.
>
> Second citizen—When clouds are seen wise men put on their cloaks.

Here are two familiar attitudes. One attitude belittles the desperateness of the situation and trusts blindly to fate to bring us through. The other realistically beholds the rolling clouds and calls for action. When the question is propounded, "Who is as the wise man?" we make reply, "When clouds are seen wise men put on their cloaks."

Clouds are rolling black about us. Personal standards are in chaotic condition. Hurtful gossip is condoned. Pettiness and unkindness have increased with the stress of the last few years as have personal and moral cowardice. Business ethics will not stand the searchlight of the inquisitor and increasingly there is no sanctity in contracts. James Truslow Adams accurately sketches "The Crisis in Character," making it a study in black with little relief or shading. Moreover, economic disaster hangs like a portentous cloud in the sky. People are hungry where there is no scarcity of food. The world is torn by suspicion. Men smile and smile, but carry a dagger in their hands and death in their hearts.

The clouds of war loom above us filled with hate, deadly germs, poisonous gases and destruction. It is not that the clouds appear. They have already rolled in thunder above our heads.

In the presence of these clouds what has the pagan to offer? He promptly throws out all religion. To him religion is "the bunk." He discards the church and in his retreat he pelts it with stones of criticism and endeavors to dissuade all and sundry from seeking solace within its walls. Sometimes he succeeds. Like a Pied Piper of Hamelin he leads forth his thoughtless hordes to seek salvation elsewhere.

He goes first to modern literature, to the bargain basement of literature, and produces the obscurities of Gertrude Stein and the soft dulcet tones of the school of Edgar Guest. One can almost hear him chant:

> Oh sing a song to the optimist,
> To the man that is brave and strong;
> Who keeps his head when things go right,
> And smiles when things go wrong.

In addition to the writings of Gertrude Stein and Edgar Guest there are volumes in tooled leather sold in sophisticated "booke shoppes." They are perhaps more plausible and therefore more insidious. Lawrence Hyde shows us the fallacy of this dependence upon modern literature. He says:

> Never surely has a generation been so incredibly well informed and yet so fatally lacking in wisdom. . . . Why does modern literature fail them in this respect? The answer can only be that the writer of today is interpreting life while standing on life's level. He is an expert in re-evoking for us states of mind, but they are the states of mind of human, all too human, men and women.

THE CONVENTIONAL RELIGIOUS MAN

Not completely content with the help gained from modern literature, this pagan Pied Piper leads his tribe to the different cults. He seeks out the Vedantist, he sits at the feet of the Rosicrucian, he relaxes and dreams under the soft spell of an Indian mystic. He follows new thought though he has never digested old thought. He becomes a spiritual globe trotter with such acceleration that he is unable to stop. He goes round and round in quest of something—he knows not what. He even forgets the darkness and the object of his search. Let us not be betrayed into following after the pagan.

What does the conventional religious man do when faced with this threatening storm? He draws about him his already scanty garments, representing a religion of hand-me-downs. He seeks to protect himself first of all. He either sidesteps his responsibility for others or attempts to satisfy his anemic conscience by thrusting forward a solution that is neither constructive nor hopeful. He clings frantically to the religious teaching of a bygone age. He prides himself upon his conservatism. He rails upon the propounder of any new theory: "Stop your interpretations. The faith I hold was good enough for my father and it is good enough for me." Recently a college dean of religion, in the course of an address before an audience of laymen, made an appeal for clothing religion in the language of the present day that youth may have an understanding which shall be in men insisted that there is no necessity for a clarified vocabulary. They drew their inadequate garments about them in resentment against analysis or clarification.

It must be said in fairness to the conventional religious man that he is often sincere, honest and agreeable. In the home, in the service club and on the golf course he conducts himself with grace and suavity. It is in the presence of the more intricate problems of life that he is so inadequate. To him there is no connection between religion and economic justice, between religion and raharmony with his studies in science and philosophy. In the question period that followed the address three lay-

Albert Buckner Coe

cial fairness, between religion and peace. When religion enters these fields he excuses himself by saying with heat: "Religion must not be connected with politics. Let the preacher stick to the simple gospel." The fault of the conventional wise man is not one of intention. It is simply that he is inelastic, often incapable of original, sustained or rigorous thought and unduly concerned with the worship of the past. We must not scorn him. We can only pity him.

THE RELIGIOUS WISE MAN

"Who is as the wise man?" Not the pagan. He is impossible. Not the conventional religious man. He may be ever so agreeable, but he is seldom helpful for the present and never constructive for the future. The wise man in religion—the religious wise man—is he who puts on the cloak of real religion, capable of growth and applicable to the world today. And what course does he follow?

In the first place, the religious wise man must really understand both the important central teachings and the

phraseology of religion. Many young people and some adults do not have a clear conception of either. Let us take the word "God." In spite of our boasted training in religious education it is almost impossible for many young people to associate God with anything that appears in nature or in life. A highly intelligent girl wrote from college that religion does not mean much to her now, but that something new has come into her life. She wrote: "What a joy to have a clarified, definite idea in one's mind as to what is fundamentally right and wrong; to have a deeper realization of what life can mean, and what truth, goodness and beauty are." She described God and yet she did not know his name.

Again we find men at times shrinking from any discussion of "sin" and "repentance" as topics that belong to ancient categories. But these words are not out of date when we explain that sin is soul sickness and repentance is recovery. Moreover they are not limited to the individual. In our day we believe that the same soul sickness that visits an individual may visit society. The social order is sick in soul and the social order must be made well. Dr. Horton of Oberlin expounds this social sin and social salvation. He says: "In one sense, religion is concerned with all the ills to which our flesh is heir, since its ultimate aim (salvation) is to overcome all the obstacles (sin) that beset the path which leads to the good life. Starvation, disease and death; vice and crime; war and oppression; failure and disappointment —there is no sort of human ill to which religion is indifferent." God, sin and salvation—these and other great theological words and concepts need to be understood.

Perhaps even more important than understanding the concepts and phraseology of religion is the necessity of having clearly in mind the twofold aspect of religion. Religion is the "life of God in the soul of man" and also a blazing forth of that glorified life for the relief of human beings. An understanding of this twofold emphasis of religion is the most important intellectual requirement of the religious wise man. Yet evidently many religionists fail in this understanding, for it is pitifully common to find laymen and ministers grinding out their onesided grist either of mystical appreciation or social emphasis each to the heated and argumentative exclusion of the other. Let us hope that the time will come when the entire gospel of Jesus may be preached and practiced with the intellectual assent of all.

TWOFOLD ASPECT OF RELIGION

All of these understandings come to us only by alertness and determination to acquire them. A friend of mine once criticized his church for failing to have in it "the spirit of inquiry." Many of our churches must be criticized for this failure. The only wise attitude for religious people is reflected in an alert-minded older woman of a conservative background who, during the visits of her minister-son is in the habit of saying: "Son, what is the latest discussion in religion? What more have you learned about the miracles?" When the church acquires that spirit of inquiry we shall not only understand but go forward as wise men in religion.

In the second place, the religious wise man seeks by every known method to acquire a soul culture. Most people are afraid at this point. They want to stop with

A Pastoral Prayer

By Frank G. Coffin

O God, Father of Thine only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and of us, Thy adopted sons, with complete confidence in Thy love, wisdom and power yearningly we open our souls unto Thee for blessing. Thy knowledge of our needs is perfect, ours is impaired by fleshly inclinations. Give to us only that which is for our highest good.

We thank Thee for what Thou art unto us, for Thou dost choose to be Thyself. Greater far than all things which we receive is the blessing of Thy loving Fatherhood. We thank Thee for the divine patience with which Thou hast tolerated our misconceptions and our perversity. We have behaved like spoiled children, given more to indulgence than to self-control. We have rebelled against the restrictions upon life which were for our highest good. Petulantly, we have quarreled with our limitations and have carelessly exposed ourselves to many dangers. If we are unhurt only Thy goodness has saved us. By our indolence we have lost much of that which is best in life. We have robbed Thee and our fellows, whose right it is to receive that which is helpful from us. We acknowledge our transgressions and our sins are ever before us. Forgive us, our Father, and do not permit us to regard lightly our transgressions or the blessing of Thy forgiveness. Continue Thy unwearying effort to guide us into righteousness.

Fit us in both spirit and ability to live helpfully with others. Our lives have been enriched by blessings from the ages and from the contributions of our fellow sojourners. Our indebtedness to Thee and to men is beyond our ability to pay yet we long to do our best. Put us in the way of those whom we may serve, and bless us with an alertness to discern our opportunities and a willingness to use them.

Keep unfading before us the vision of the sort of world Thou dost desire. Aid us in using all that we possess for good. Make the way that is right so clear that prejudice and self-interest cannot obscure it. Change our duties into joys. Save us from that discouragement which palsies good effort and bless us with a daily enthusiasm for godliness.

Send Thy Spirit unto all mankind. Lead them out of their misunderstandings, differing interpretations and clashing interests and Thine shall be the Kingdom, and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

being intelligent, forgetting that emotion is a large part of personality. Everything else—newspaper, radio, moving picture—plays on emotion, while religion is spending itself in being rational. We must not be afraid of symbolism, of mysticism, of contemplation, of beauty. Through these we cultivate the soul.

"CONTEMPLATIVE STILLNESS"

Contemplation is essential for soul culture. The words of Charles Morgan in "The Fountain" have struck a responsive chord with many of us: "Contemplative stillness is but another word for invulnerability." The statement gives another clue to the positive strength which Jesus gained through contemplation upon the mountain top. The same strength came to Michael Pupin, the scientist, who as a boy was minding the sheep in the hills of Serbia when the bell in the little church nearby began to ring. His mother said: "Michael, Michael, do you not hear God's messenger calling you to his altar to praise his everlasting glory?" Michael Pupin, by contemplation on the hillside, by worship at God's altar, gained strength.

Pure beauty has life-giving power. Flowers, leafy trees, winding roads, steep hillsides and rippling brooks give wings to the soul. It is possible for poetry to be unintelligible but so beautiful that it waters the soul like a silver dew. The lines of Francis Thompson found in "A Judgment in Heaven" will serve as illustration:

> With plumes night-tinctured englobed and cinctured
> Of Saints, his guided steps held on
> To where on the far crystalline pale, of that transstellar
> Heaven there shone
> The immutable crocean dawn effusing from the
> Father's throne.

Try reading these lines. You may not understand them, but what do they do for your soul?

There is one direct and immediate result of our effort to cultivate the soul. If we have been depending on our own strength in the midst of the baffling problems of the world we become cloudy in our vision and hopeless in our outlook. But he who has enriched his soul finds it possible to turn to God in time of stress.

> My sorrow had pierced me through; it throbbed in my
> heart like a thorn;
> This way and that I stared, as a bird with a broken limb
> Hearing the hounds strong feet thrust imminent through
> the corn,
> So to my God I turned: and I had forgotten him.

APPLYING RELIGION TO LIFE

And mysticism? I have a friend—not a minister—who introduced me to Evelyn Underhill through one of her great books on the inner life. That man is the embodiment of all that I have been saying concerning intelligence and soul culture. He is a mystic to a degree which is beyond my longing imitation. Yet, strange as it may seem, with his mysticism is coupled a passionate interest in stamping out the evils in our society that make misery for men.

In this friend—intellectual, mystical—I find a suggestion of the third essential in the religious wise man. He applies his religion to life. He goes forth with courage and determination to lift up the lame in our economic world; to touch with a hand of healing some Negro or Jew who has been wounded through heartless prejudice born of the beast in man; to speak words of comfort to the distressed in body and mind. Not content with spending himself in tender remedial service the religious wise man takes it upon himself to act in the interest of a preventive program. He hears of the "silver shirts," a growing organization for the persecution of the Jew in this country, and he raises his voice against the movement in the name of Jesus the Jew. He enters wholeheartedly into the program that seeks to make unpopular the phrase "special privilege" and to exalt the recognition of the rights and privileges of the hitherto underprivileged. He looks with horror at the hideous effects of war which kills the bodies of millions and mangles the souls of millions more; and he determines that he will not be guilty of following the passive policy of "all will be well" but will strike this evil and strike it hard. He will learn of the activities of munition makers and expose them. He will raise his voice and use his influence against all efforts to make America war-minded. He will be untiring in his attempt to influence the mind of government that it may in every given case throw its weight on the side of the peace of the world. What further? Many of us feel that he should take a vow to himself that never again will he endorse war by act, word or thought.

If the conventional religious man tries to prevent him by saying that religion has nothing to do with these evils, that religion must attend to its own knitting and give solace and comfort to the individual, the wise man will rebuke him as being narrow, cabined, heartless and altogether lacking in true religion.

JESUS OUR INSPIRATION

It is not easy to spur oneself on from understanding to greater understanding. The soul which is rich in its culture is by the same token keenly sensitive to every hurt. There is endless opposition, discouragement and persecution for the man who applies religion to life. But the religious wise man has a constant source of inspiration. There is one scene in the Passion Play at Oberammergau which gives the command, "Look and live." That scene shows us Jesus on the cross. We take our stand before him. He cuts himself off from the thought of the fathers to launch into a new and revolutionary understanding. He practiced communion with the Father until his soul was so rich and highly sensitized that in it he could hold the world. He used his religion, his store of God, for the everyday life of humanity. For all this he died, but on him the religious wise man may look and take courage and live.

Gilead

THE heart is cold that has not chilled
With fear that love could pass away.
The soul is dry that does not thirst
For clear refreshment day by day.
And eyes are dim that in the light,
Have never seen the need to pray.

MARY BRENNAN CLAPP.

Training Intelligent Leaders for Tomorrow

By Douglas Horton

FOR a number of years during my early ministry it was a source of distress to me that the stronger young men growing up in the church to which I ministered entered upon business and professional careers without seeming to give a thought to their larger responsibilities. They were good fellows, but they had no notion of becoming the Christian leaders their community needed. I had to face the fact that though there were many people of mediocre capacity within the church, the few men of real intelligence and power in the town gave more time to the country club than to the common good.

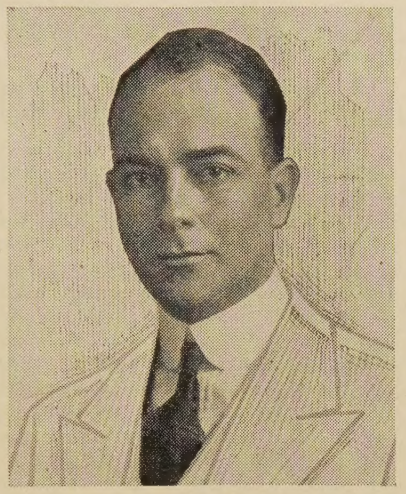
The situation caused me no end of pained perplexity then, as indeed it does now, but in these later days I have discovered a technique which, since it has already shown rich results and promises more for the future, I may profitably share with my brother ministers. There is nothing original about it; others have used it; Christ himself was a master of it; I fear I have only been stupid in not discovering it for myself sooner.

● *A Ministry to The Few*

Perhaps "technique" is too high-sounding a word for the simple usage that I have found so effective. That usage is for the minister to pick out every year one or two—and never more than a very few—of the young men of real parts in the parish who are destined to be leaders and to cultivate such intimacy with them that his, the minister's, problems become their problems and his outlook theirs. This seems a simple method indeed—almost foolishly simple—but it is my own experience that this ministry to the few tends to be forgotten in the stress of the ministry to the many unless it is posted in the mind definitely and scheduled on one's calendar as a matter of paramount importance.

My neglect of the potential Christian leaders in the parish first became apparent to me some years ago when a small group of young men in the church asked for a conference with me. In a sense these young men had not been neglected, for they had enjoyed all the opportunities extended generally to the young people of their age, that is, in the late twenties. They had not, however, had the opportunities which should have been accorded real leaders.

They intimated when we met that the church seemed to them a company of old people habituated to a routine at the farthest possible remove from romance, adventure, or even progress. It was not only the church that was thus organized: the town, the larger businesses, the better established clubs, all seemed to be groupings of old people who did not really know where they were going. It was not only an old man's world to them, but a blind



Douglas Horton

old man's world. These young people told me quite frankly that for the most part they did not like these old people nor their ways, that they would like to do something to change the situation, but that they did not know how to go about it.

● *The Pattern of the Elders*

I began to look at the community through their young eyes and presently discovered with something of a shock that their ideas were not far from the truth. I thought of the governing board of our church. It was composed of men in the business life of our town, some of them quite successful in their line, but all of them, with one exception, men well past forty who did not read, did not think, except in the light of inveterate prejudices, and had no real plan or proposal for the redemption of humanity aside from a blurred thought that things would somehow be better if everybody was Christian. I thought of our mayor and board of aldermen: they were a group thrown up as a lateral moraine in small-town politics with an average I.Q. of about 50. I thought of the executives in our larger factories and mills: they were a crowd whose conversation in a smoking room was limited to golf, bridge, their particular business, and the observations of some favorite "columnist" in the daily paper. It became suddenly apparent to me that ours was a community almost wholly without Christian leadership.

The young men who had come to me had instinctively and rightly felt that they must grow inevitably in the pattern of their elders which they saw on every hand unless they took definite steps to discover and adhere to one which was larger and more inspiring. This instinct on their part laid a mandate on me.

● *An Intelligent Layman Points the Way*

I have mentioned an exception to the general rule in the membership of our church board. He was such a man as any minister must draw to his heart. He was intelligent about religion. He kept himself abreast of biblical criticism; he had on his desk the latest publications on the fundamentalist controversy, then just beginning to take shape; he had made himself a most efficient teacher of young men by the constant study of the psychology—especially the new psychology—of youth; he was a student of government and on occasion he did not mince his words concerning the fatuousness of the party in power. He could do well almost anything that needed to be done within the church and was the first man thought of by the community for any public cause—the building of a new library, the raising of funds for the hospital, or a welcome to a distinguished stranger.

From this layman I had learned that after his graduation from college the minister of his church had singled him out, had made it a point to keep up his acquaintance, had placed books in his hand, had discussed them with him, had opened to him many of his problems of pastoral and administrative work, and had in general made him a younger *alter ego* to himself. Here was the model for my young men and me.

● *Orienting Young Men For Leadership*

The upshot on my part was a renewed sensitivity to the fact that the minister's task is not merely to sustain spiritually the people in general, but to select and train the Christian leaders of the future. I find myself now working systematically to this end.

It is a presupposition that the young leaders to be trained are already con-

secrated to the work of Christ in the world. Our immediate problem takes evangelism for granted. Our concern is that consecration should be so fed with education and the chance for intelligent expression that it may grow into authentic social power. For this, the minister should proceed, I believe, along two lines.

In the first place, the minds of our young people of promise need to be brought into touch with the intellectual problems of the day which the church is endeavoring to meet. It is amazing how little even the brightest university graduate of today knows of the modern religious outlook. He still prays, if he prays at all, with the "Now I lay me" of his boyhood. Practical religion is to him in the main equivalent to the ten commandments: a set of prohibitions in the realm of petty morals. He comes to church, when he comes, to hear the sermon alone; worship he does not even understand.

● *Some Books That Help*

In order that the young leader may orient himself to the modern view of the Bible, I usually give him, as a first book to read, J. Paterson Smyth's "The Making of the Bible." This ordinarily interests him as much as a modern novel. If he wants to go further, I give him either the volumes of Kent's "Historical Bible" or some other modern work. Theology, again, is a field in which young people of quick mentality find an extraordinary interest. Books are written today in this field so clearly and so fascinatingly that it is a stupid person indeed who is not stimulated by them. I have found the little volumes by L. P. Jacks of inestimable usefulness at this point.

The Christian religion being one-half inward and one-half outward, it becomes in this day, when all things outward are changing, a peculiar necessity to study the changes which must come over the outward expressions of Christianity. If a young man can be given to see that there are certain Christian ways of doing things in the great arena of international relations or of industry—and certain other ways that are distinctly non-Christian, if he can be made to understand that it is to those men of his own generation who are possessed of a dedicated intelligence that the world is looking for the right way out, he will be likely to read political science as voraciously as his minister. In this realm I have lately been using as a "first book" G. D. H. Cole's "Intelligent Man's Guide through Chaos."

● *Training for Practical Church Work*

The second line along which it is profitable to direct the young leader's attention is concerned more directly, though not wholly, with the work of the church. This appeals to the more "practical-minded."

Most of the great modern industries which take young men just out of college to train them to be future executives give them a long course in the business itself. A young man will be placed for two months, let us say, in the shipping room, then two months in the credit department, and so on, until he has come to know the work of the factory in all its phases at first hand. He then sits in with the management as it discusses problems of policy which should interest him. In the end he knows the company thoroughly. Why should not the churches do something of the same sort? Why should not the young men who called upon me, for instance, have been taken into the counsels of the executive groups of the church?

● *Sharing Church Problems With Young Men*

They—or one or two of them—might have been asked to sit whenever possible with the governing board itself. This would have given them familiarity with a good deal of routine, but it would also have made it manifest to them—if the governing board was worth its salt—how zealously and wisely the church was at work to make the influence of Christ felt in every part of the community. They might then have been asked to sit with the board of trustees for a period—if the board were independent of the governing committee. There they would at least have come to see how difficult a problem it is to keep public property in order. A few months with the church school cabinet and the committees concerned with the development of age-group activities throughout the church, or, better yet, with church school classes of their own, would have given them a new appreciation of the energy that has to go into the educating of a community.

Young men thus trained in the ways of the church come to realize what the minister already knows, that the church is the most magnificent of all the social instruments to assist and encourage him in the task of building a better world.

● *How Shared Experience Remakes the Minister*

It is not only the young man or woman upon whom the beneficial results of such a practice as I have described are evident. The minister himself begins to walk on a new level of experience when it is shared experience. As long as the only fellowship in his work that he has from the parish is the gushing "That was a wonderful sermon, Dr. Smith" at the close of the morning service, his life tends to be too lonely. But when he has about him a small and select group of young people who know his mind and whose mind he knows, and with whom he can share the joys and tribulations of his task, his life begins to take on a radiance.

The boards with whom the young people sit unofficially find they have to shake themselves into new life. It was all very well while they sat by themselves to take twenty minutes to discuss whether the subcommittee on suppers should be composed of seven members or five, but young people who are eager grow tired of such discussions. Such debates seem to them as futile as they really are. Under the influence of these young inquirers watching them, the older people find it necessary to keep to the central functions which call them together. Now and then they even have to restate, for the sake of their young hearers, the very purposes for which the church exists in the community—and this practice has been known to have a most salutary effect upon themselves.

In a word, though our churches have grown to huge mechanical proportions, the personal companionship of the minister is still among the best gifts they have to offer. That companionship is needed by all the young people; but if the young people who are destined for social leadership in the future do not have it adequately, there is a question about the future of the Christian church.

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The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

I HAVE just returned from an extended itinerary by automobile through many cities—Chicago to Hot Springs, Ark., to New Orleans, to St. Petersburg and Daytona Beach, Florida, to Asheville, N. C., to Lexington, Ky., and home—3,660 miles by the speedometer. I attended more movies in the three weeks than I customarily attend in a whole year. A movie is a likely place to spend the evening in a strange town where, after a day's travel, you plan to spend the night. I saw some good movies. But most of those I saw were bad, many of them vulgar, saturated with sex and crime. Even where you do get a good picture, it is preceded or followed by another which may be utterly filthy. In New Orleans I attended the Catholic cathedral and heard a powerful sermon on the movies which was preceded by the reading of a scorching pastoral letter on the same subject by the archbishop of New Orleans addressed to all the churches of the diocese and read that morning in them all. There ought to be some union of Catholic and Protestant forces to fight this iniquity. The movies are creating a sex-saturated generation. I have lost all patience with the dilettante efforts of the leaders of Protestantism to beat back this tide of vulgarity. I am sorry to learn that certain leaders representative of the Federal Council of Churches have been drawn into the National Board of Review, an organization drawing 90 per cent of its support from the producers. Past experience with such attempts at "cooperation" should have prompted these esteemed leaders to decline membership on a board which puts them in a false position.

The Movie Iniquity

The Book of the Month

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN LITERATURE AND RELIGION, *by Halford E. Luccock. Willett, Clark & Company, $2.00.*

WHAT can I say to convey to the preachers of our time my sense of the importance of this work of Professor Luccock, its importance for their minds, their souls—and their preaching? The heart of any era is disclosed in its literature. And Luccock has taken the whole body of American literature produced since the world war and laid bare the heart of this entire epoch. It is a heart of disillusionment and confusion, of moral chaos and unconscious tragedy, a heart that has lost God and seeks for something to take God's place, not knowing that it has lost him nor that it is seeking him again. From Mencken and Sinclair Lewis to Willa Cather and T. S. Eliot, this professor of theology, teacher of preachers, covers the whole range of post-war fiction, criticism, and poetry and shows what the great masses of our people have been thinking about and are still thinking. Luccock is our most authoritative diagnostician of the American mind. He wrote an earlier book on "Jesus and the American Mind," which was a sort of structural analysis of our mentality. His present volume shows us the blood stream which circulates through the whole body of our contemporary taste and thought. He finds it thin and ill-nourished, and often poisonous. He is looking at contemporary literature from the standpoint of religion, and yet he does not preach. He leaves the preaching for you and me to do! But he sets up the target for our preaching. The trouble with most of us preachers is that we do not know our own time well enough. We preach to the nineteenth century or to the first century or to the Amelekites, the Hittites and the Jebusites. Reading Luccock's book will focus our preaching on the realistic needs of the people of our own day and generation. Sermons sprout from every page.

A Thought for the Month

MY heart goes out in pity toward that preacher who has traded off the eternal gospel for what he thinks of as the social gospel. I who believe profoundly in the social gospel, who have dedicated myself to its proclamation and interpretation, have never relaxed in my own spirit the conviction that a social gospel which is not suffused and penetrated with a sense of the eternal is no gospel at all. If the new social order for which we of the modern spirit labor, and which it was the genius of pristine and essential Christianity to envisage, is only a development or an attainment within the narrow bounds of history, and without significance beyond the finite banks of time, we who devote our energies to its realization will surely fall on disillusion. The idea that the bare reconstruction of the social order will, per se, be the Kingdom of God is a fallacy into which, alas, too many of our ministers have fallen. The solemn truth is that if we should awake tomorrow to find an order of society fashioned according to our heart's desire, the Christian gospel would be not less but more needed than ever before. The attainment of the socialist ideal, for example, would not only bring temporal problems of its own which the socialist does not now envisage, but it would leave unsatisfied the unquenchable longing of the soul of man for the life eternal. This longing will grow not less but more restless and avid as conditions of justice and equality and brotherhood are set up in the world of space and time. The need and function of the Christian faith will never be outgrown by social progress. Rather, our social progress will but widen the field and enrich the soil for the exercise of the full Christian faith. We have here no continuing city. Our true citizenship must always be in heaven. The message of the living God, of the hope eternal, of the fulfillment of human life in the grace of God, of the everlasting fact of Christ disclosed to mankind on the first Easter day—this gospel never can be outmoded or outneeded, and he makes himself poor indeed who trades it off for any other gospel.

A Bad Trade

Charles Clayton Morrison

In the MAY Number of the Christian Century Pulpit

Sermons by

CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY, First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.
"Bought With a Price" (Memorial Day sermon)
FRED W. FIELD, First Baptist Church, Green Bay, Wis.
"Your Friend, the Unknown Soldier" (Memorial Day)
ALFRED W. HURST, Pilgrim Congregational Church, Chattanooga, Tenn.
"Religion and a New Deal for Humanity"
JOHN J. CASTLEBERRY, Walnut Hills Christian Church, Cincinnati, O.
"Why Christianity Lives"
PHILLIPS ENDICOTT OSGOOD, Emmanuel Church, Boston, Mass.
"A Sermon to Young People"

—and other sermons

THIS MAY ISSUE will be timely and inspiring. It will include also a Preacher Problems article by Bruce S. Wright, of Meadville, Pa.

Our last number—that for March—elicited more than usual interest. "A most extraordinary number," writes Rev. K. Palmer Miller of Westminster church, Seattle. And Mr. Miller says particularly of Dr. W. P. Merrill's contribution on "The Assurance of Immortality": "That sermon is the strongest sermon on immortality I have seen in many years." The May issue will be an equally impressive one.

THE JUNE ISSUE WILL BE A REFORMED CHURCH NUMBER.

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